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Reappraisal Held Up on Nixon House

SACRAMENTO, Calif., Oct. 19 (UPI)—Orange County and California officials have failed to reach agreement on a contract for the state Board of Equalization to appraise President Nixon's San Clemente property.

The President's seaside villa was originally appraised at $1.3 million by Orange County Assessor Jack Villarga. However, critics have charged the figure was too low.

William Bennett, chairman of the state board, said the appraisal should have been more than $2 million. Robert Battin, and Orange County supervisor, said it should have been $2.3 million.

County supervisors earlier this month voted to ask the state board to perform a new appraisal, and authorized a contract to carry it out. But the state board Thursday refused to approve the proposed contract, objecting to provisions which members said would prevent state appraisers from performing an "honest" appraisal.

The Democratic-dominated state board directed its legal staff to negotiate with the county and return later, possibly next week, with an acceptable contract.

The controversy over the value of the President's Western White House property has continued for months. The central issue is whether security improvements enhanced the property's value, and thus are subject to taxes.